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Landmarks in Education.

(Paper Read before the St. Louis Teachers' Association,)

BY LOUIS F. SOLDAN.

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NOV. 7, 1923

The Western.

JANUARY, 1876.

LANDMARKS IN EDUCATION.

THE variety of the world that immediately surrounds us, appeals to our senses in each of its objects. The multitude and diversity of impressions which we receive encumbers our judgment; we see the detail, but we are apt to lose sight of what is great. If we step close to the canvas, which "Time's whizzing loom prepares," in order to examine more closely part of the ever-moving dissolving views which life throws upon it; we may see the shadows face to face, but our eye fails to grasp at the same time the ends of the canvas. If we wish to see the whole scene we must stand back. The true magnitude of things can be appreciated only from a distance. There hills and flowers disappear, and the Alpine peak alone, strikes the eye.

So in history, it is difficult to distinguish the great from the small in events and men that immediately surround us; it is difficult to write a just history of one's own time. But if we look at distant times, whatever was small and insignificant, has passed out of sight, and the extreme heights of humanity stand in lonely grandeur.

Great men are the landmarks, the monuments which great times leave as a token that they existed. Time is eternal, but ages are short-lived: great men live longer than their

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times. Great men are the brazen tablets on which a time inscribes a record of what it was, and accomplished, and then passes away into silent eternity. Ages vanish, and are forgotten if they find not a voice strong enough to speak to the generations of following epochs, through the din and roar of fleeting centuries.

In Education as well as in nature, we are apt to ignore what is great and small, important or less important, if we live exclusively in what is near and immediate. Pedantry is the result of looking closely at the detail, without connecting it with great principles.

To discern what is great in education, we must not only know its details, but must be able to view it from a distance that gives independence and impartiality to our judgment. For this end we must study not only the history of education in its great teachers, but also ascertain how it reflects itself in the minds of great men who are the exponents of their times.

While Goethe was not a teacher, his educational views are well worthy of attention, as those of the representative man of his time.

Goethe's early educational views are the expression of a century that was the most fertile in educational theory; of a time that was frantic with educational excitement; the time of Rousseau. In Rousseau the educational movement that had begun with the Reformation, and had been continued by Montaigne and Locke found a vehement and thrilling utterance. What Rousseau felt and Goethe understood was but a sequel to the educational movement of the time of the Reformation, when the Middle ages rose from their knees to begin the work of the new day.

The time of the Reformation is important, not only on account of the religious movement, as the name would lead us.

to suppose, but because it was the general awakening of the spirit of European humanity, that freed itself from the fetters of a barbarous and dark age.

The free institutions of the Saxon races, which were so thoroughly intermingled with their character, had been trodden down by the iron heel of the Norman conquerors. Possession had passed out of the hands of freeholders, to those of the feudal lords. No longer the freeman, and not yet the king ruled the land, but the nobility. But the rule of the many was already declining.

As the power of the nobles was diminishing, as chivalry consumed itself in endless civil feuds, the power of the king increased, and promised to rise to the absolute sway which it had after the lapse of two centuries, when wielded by the crafty Louis XIV. While the general drift of the time approached despotism, we see the first rise of an undercurrent, running in the direction of modern freedom and culture.

In the North as well as in the South, the spirit of the European races unfolded the most energetic activity, that contrasted strangely with the intellectual stupor of a thousand preceding years. In the South it took the form of imagination and adventurous discovery; in the North it stepped forth as thought and invention. The southern nations extended their power; the northern nations deepened theirs. In Italy, Dante, Raphael and M. Angelo had shed on their land a lustre, which is more permanent than the light of the sun. The Portuguese and Spaniards carried their arms over the unknown main to unknown lands. The North invented the printing press whose work holds a nation together more firmly than does the sword.

With the invention of printing begins modern education. It made the means of culture accessible to all, and hence arose the idea of general education, that is, of the wish to be in-

structed in the use of all these means. The translation of the Bible which took place in this century made it the object of religious zeal to spread education, that enabled all to read the sacred books. The invention of gunpowder freed the serf from the power of the lord.

In the brutal strife of the age, mind interfered by inventing the means, arming the weak hand with a power that made it strong. In England after the war of the Roses had broken the strength of the Norman feudal power, the house of Tudor rested itself on the support of the citizens against the nobility of England and as a last step in this historical development, the citizen became strong enough to defy and defeat both king and nobles.

The very basis of modern institutions is respect for each individual. The basis of former institutions was respect for a few individuals. When the citizen began to assert himself, he unconsciously asserted the rights of an individuality, whose value was enhanced and drawn into self-consciousness by the beginning of education. No great age is without great teachers, nor is the time of the Reformation lacking in this respect. Mind finds itself again, and believes in its inherent ability to recover itself by education. While during the long array of centuries immediately preceding, the history of education is almost a blank, there arises with this time a series of teachers and educational writers who prepare the way for the coming schools, by solving some problems and foreshadowing others.

Schools for the rich, for the scholar, the priest, the noble had existed before. Common Schools arose at this time. Their origin was due to the religious movement. Their aim was to teach to read the Bible and catechism; it must be borne in mind that this is true of all the Common Schools; it is true of the schools which Luther called into life, as well as

of the schools which Massachusetts founded and defined by a law which sets forth as the aim of instruction, the teaching of the reading of the Bible.

Of the educational landmarks that point the way from the Reformation to Goethe's times, three names deserve mention; Montaigne, Locke and Rousseau. In each of them we see the transition to modern education; in none of them do we see modern education entire.

On the background of the dark ages they shine in dazzling splendor, which, however, fades when we substitute the background of modern times.

In each of the three writers the creed of modern times finds expression, namely the creed; that the individual has absolute value. In each of them we find golden maxims as to how to educate *one* individual; the question, how to educate all individuals lies still beyond their vision.

The most perfect education they find in the education of each child by its own tutor. How infinitely superior school education is to this had not yet been discovered. The education by the tutor, which we are wont to consider an anachronism that makes the pupil a hermit, was the ideal of Locke and of Rousseau.

Montaigne, the most brilliant writer of early French literature lived during the latter half of the 16th century. A brilliant scholar himself, he turned his sharp pen against the customary mode of classical study. Mankind had studied Latin and Greek for a few thousand years, and becoming young, again, revolted against the tiresome accustomed lore.

Montaigne is the French Bacon. Theirs was a kind of rebellion against the master of all that know, Aristotle. Independence of authority, be it Aristotle's, or of tradition in general, freedom of investigation, the study of nature, were the watchwords. Montaigne, however, did not neglect the all im-

portant culture of the ethical, while he coincides with Bacon in his misappreciation of traditional knowledge.

Montaigne's brilliant scholarly acquirements are nothing to him; nothing seems to be certain except knowledge wrenched directly from nature and the mind; he frequently winds up his profound essays on Church, State and School, with the contemptuous question: "*Que sais-je*"—What do I know?

A few of his principles will show his leading views, and the place he occupies in the historical process of education.

"In consequence of our methods of instruction," says Montaigne, "teacher and pupil may gain more learning, but they do not become any better fitted for life. We ought not to ask who has been taught more, but who has been taught better.

We study to fill the memory and let intellect and heart remain empty. We are well able to say, "That's what Cicero says." "That is Plato's opinion"—but what do we say? what is our opinion?

"The other a parrot can do as well as we.

"What good can it do to fill our intellectual stomachs with food, if we do not digest and assimilate it? We rely so much on others, that we lose our own power by inactivity. If I wish to arm myself against the fear of death, I appeal to Seneca; if I need solace for myself and others, I get it from Cicero. I should have found it in myself if I had been taught to do it. I cannot bear this beggarly existence; we may become learned by the learning of others; we become wise only by our own wisdom. A lady told me that whoever wanted to absorb so much mind of others would have to compress and narrow his own mind—which of course is a wrong view of the matter." And in another place: "The mistake in our education lies in the fact that we lay too much stress on intellectual, and underrate ethical culture. We attach too much importance to memory and neglect what is useful.

"The tutor must hold his pupil responsible not only for the words of the lesson, but also for meaning and content. He must judge of the benefits which a pupil derives from instruction, not by the evidence of the pupil's memory, but by his life. The pupil must review and consider the information presented to him in a thousand ways and must apply it before the teacher can tell whether he grasped it."

In regard to the order in which instruction is to be given Montaigne says :

"The first instruction given to a child must aim at governing his ethical and moral nature; he must be taught to know himself well, to live well and to die well.

"The scholar is not expected so much to recite his lesson as to show practically that he has mastered it.

"Do not drill on words; if your pupil knows the thing, he will find the words to express it; he must speak in a natural way, not like a book. We cannot borrow sinews and power as we can a cloak or garment.

"The first object of instruction must be the mother-tongue.

"We must not educate merely a soul, not merely a body, but a human being. Do not tear one thing into two.

"The soul will succumb, if it is not assisted by a strong body."

While Montaigne is the principal figure in the history of education of the 16th, another thinker and another nation steps into the foreground in the 17th century. Locke was destined to give expression to the educational view that was the necessary sequence of Lord Bacon's reformatory efforts, which I have mentioned before. In Locke the reaction against authority which found utterance through Montaigne has advanced another step. While Montaigne objected to the mode of studying books and warned against neglecting the body altogether, Locke the scientist and philosopher dwelt on the physical side

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of education with the greatest emphasis, and we find in him the transition to Rousseau, the educator by nature *par excellence*.

We might characterize the three writers by saying that the watchword of Montaigne was; Mind and Nature, of Locke; Nature and Mind, of Rousseau; Nature and again Nature.

Locke's necessary educational tendency is apparent from his philosophical stand-point. All knowledge is dependent on experience. Experience originates in the fact that the senses transmit to the intellect the impression of external objects. On sensation and reflection all knowledge rests.

From this it almost becomes possible to construct *a priori*, Locke's educational doctrines. Nature as the basis of all things, of intellect itself, is to be considered in the first place.

His views were developed in "Some Thoughts Concerning Education," and, as we may suppose, no small part of this is devoted to physical culture. In his attention to education in infancy, and the fact that he recommends the use of toys for the purpose of giving instruction, I find the first historical beginning of the ideas of the Kindergarten and Froebel's system in modern times.

Locke, as well as Rousseau, describes in his educational work, how one individual is to be educated; in our times this is no longer the question as we must ask how can a class be taught best? The first thing the educator must do is to watch the individuality of his pupil, according to which the child must be treated and instructed.

This can be done by observing the child in play, because there his individuality will unfold itself. Education must always be connected with the natural gifts of the pupil, The highest object of education is: a healthy mind in a healthy body. Hence the body must be made strong.

How to do this Locke describes in the most explicit way.

His work is a perfect hygiene of education. Home education he thinks preferable to school education, because in schools good morals are sacrificed for the sake of acquirements. Education out-side of the house, makes the boy quicker and more adroit in his dealings with others; besides there is some value in emulation. But quickness and adroitness not unfrequently degenerate into roughness and impudence.

Moral education must be taken care of above all, for which purpose self-control is of the highest importance. Commence early to counteract moral faults. Represent lying to children as something revolting, so contradictory to noble character that no one who has self-respect can bear to be accused of lying. If the child is caught in a lie the first time, he ought not to be reprimanded as we should do with another mistake, but we should show our astonishment, as if this were an astounding thing. If it happens again, he must receive a severe reprimand, and all the persons with whom he comes into contact must show the greatest dissatisfaction. If it occurs again, recourse must be had to the rod.

Among the most important means of moral education he mentions praise and blame. No motives will touch the soul deeper than honor and disgrace. To inspire children with keen sensitiveness for their good reputation is the great secret of education. Make the child as susceptible as possible, to praise and blame. On this basis principles of morals and religion can be fostered.

The praise which children receive they must receive in presence of others, for then it is double reward.

But their mistakes and faults ought not to be made public, for this creates moral obtuseness. Punish without passion. Corporal punishment must be resorted to only in case of obstinacy and resistance. Reason with the child by examples.

Knowledge is the most unimportant factor in education,

whereas we are apt to consider it the most important, or the only object of education. Reading, writing and arithmetic are necessary, but they are not the principal things. It would be foolish not to value a virtuous or wise man higher than a learned man. Make children love the teacher and the study. Do not assign the study as a task. Even play would become obnoxious to the boy if he were compelled to play. Make children like the work and if possible, make them work only if they are disposed to work.

As soon as the boy is able to speak, he must learn to read ; he must learn it by toys, by a geometrical body with twenty-five surfaces, one for each letter. Children gain their first ideas not by words but by things and the representations of things. From what is known proceed to what is connected with this knowledge, but is not known.

In the course of study which Locke suggests the natural sciences and things that are of direct use in life predominate. The principle of utility prevails. Of what is not useful, of art, poetry and music, the great philosopher speaks with the contempt of a barbarian. Rather a shoemaker than a poet is about the gist of his opinion.

Montaigne is the representative educator of the 16th, Locke of the 17th, Rousseau of the 18th century. In Rousseau the antithesis to classical learning becomes complete. What Montaigne wishes to modify, Locke to diminish, he rejects altogether. Emile, Rousseau's imaginary pupil, must not know what a book is when he is twelve years of age. Long before Rousseau sprang his educational work "Emile" upon the astounded world, he had won his first laurels by writing an essay that received the prize of the Academy of Dijon. The essay was an attempt to show that progress in science and art has not contributed to improve morality. It is characteristic that some writers assert that Rousseau had first written the essay

to prove the salutary influence of science on morality when Diderot advised him to turn it the other way as the sensation would be greater. Rousseau's *Emile* was the great event of the last century previous to the French Revolution. Its boldness in thought and language, startled the whole world. Kant, the sage of Königsberg, perhaps for the first time forgot the walk which he had been in the habit of taking at a certain hour every day of his life, when he was under the fascination of the work.

Rousseau undertakes to show how he would have an imaginary pupil, *Emile*, educated from infancy to manhood and with all the shortcomings of Rousseau's life, with all the teeming contradictions of the work, with the preposterousness of its general drift, with all its senseless paradoxes, it remains in its particulars a treasure-house of educational gems. *Emile* has a tutor who remains with him until he attains the age of manhood. *Emile* is not taught by books. Before he is fifteen the tutor will not attempt to teach him to read. Up to that time *Emile*'s physical nature, his senses, his character, will and intellect are trained by the educator's conversation and example. No other book but the world, no other instruction but facts; the pupil must not know things because he has been told about them, but because he understands them. He must invent science.

A few of Rousseau's principles will show the position he holds in education and at the same time give an illustration of the paradoxical way of writing which he enjoys, and to which his success is to a small extent due, as such paradoxes never fail to enlist the attention of the reader.

Emile opens with Rousseau's educational creed: "All things are good when they leave the hands of the Creator: all things degenerate under the hands of man.

"Educate the child into humanity, and not for any special position or calling.

"The first tears of the child are requests, ignore them and they will become commands.

"All wickedness is the result of weakness; make the child strong. One who is all-powerful could not be wicked.

"It is a mistake to teach children to speak very early—because this is the reason why they learn to speak less early and less well. The baneful politeness which we possess, to appear satisfied with words which we do not understand, begins earlier than we usually think. The child will listen to the flow of words of his teacher as he used to listen to talk of his nurse. Let the vocabulary of children be small and not contain more words than ideas.

"There is nothing more silly than children with whom you have reasoned too much. If children understood reasons there would be no necessity for educating them. You might as well suppose that a child is five feet high as to attribute judgment to him. The rein which leads the child must be iron necessity, not human authority.

"In education do the opposite of what is conventional and traditional, and you will do the right thing.

"The tutor is to be blamed for all the falsehoods of children. Why do they allow children to promise things, why do they ask questions when the child has done wrong? We, whose sole purpose is to lead our pupils by instruction to exercise their powers, do not ask them for the truth, because we are afraid they might distort it; nor do we allow them to give a promise, because they might be tempted not to fulfill it.

"The only moral law for the child is: Do not wrong anybody.

"Teach your pupil what immediately surrounds him instead of allowing his mind to wander continually in other times, in other climates to the end of the earth.

"No jealousy, no emulation, not even in running a race. I had a hundred times rather see that the child does not learn

anything, than that it should acquire knowledge driven by emulation or jealousy."

The result which Rousseau apprehends from this sort of education is expressed in the following:

"When Emile is twelve years old, his bearing and manner will express assurance and confidence. He is candid and unrestrained, but not overbearing and vain. His language is plain, and he will not talk unnecessarily. His ideas are limited, but definite. He knows nothing by rote, but he knows a good deal from experience. If he can not read very well in our books, he can read so much better in the book of nature. His mind is not on his tongue, but in his head. He speaks but one language, but he understands what he says. If he can talk less well than others, he can *act* better. Neither example nor authority will influence him much, he acts as he thinks best. In short, the teacher cannot make a show of him, as is the favorite custom of most teachers. 'My pupil is not rich enough to make a show of intellectual treasures; he cannot show anything but himself.' "

Rousseau's solution of the educational problem contradicts and hence cancels itself. The reformer of the education of the world confesses himself incapable of applying his principles practically.

His imaginary pupil Emile he educates with the highest means which his subtle thoughts can find—his own children he sends to the foundling asylum. He teaches return to nature and keeps his pupil under the most unnatural tutelage up to his marriage. He educates Emile according to what he thinks nature, and then his pen forsakes Emile in the shipwreck of life and conscience. He represents that all is good as it comes from the hands of nature, but instead of allowing Emile to grow up like Robinson Crusoe, he places him under what he calls the degenerating hands of man. He asserts the

right of individuality, but immediately forgets that the individuality of his tutor is sunk in the attempt to create another. Two individualities are needed in this process to create one. One can well understand Voltaire's sharp satire in his letter to Rousseau. Referring to the recommended "return to nature," he said, "After I read your book, I felt moved to creep upon all fours and to eat grass."

Nevertheless his book touched the heart of his time; his watchword: "Men are created equal," became the watchword of his age and found its bloody application in the French Revolution. His theories spread over Europe like wild-fire, producing the wildest educational excitement. The world believed that the educational philosopher's stone had been found. Educational mountebanks harangued the public and exhorted it to furnish the money for the founding of schools that were to carry the new theory into practice. More than Montaigne's and Locke's ideas was Rousseau's system carried into practice, not in France, but in Germany, where it gave rise to the so-called philanthropine under Basedow; the oddest of all educators. Nor did Rousseau's marvellous influence die away soon, as Pestalozzi gave lasting life and a solid basis to the philosopher's wild speculation. All the writers of last century are more or less under the influence of Rousseau and we can hardly point out any prominent author of this period who does not in some way or other touch educational problems, Goethe as well as the rest.

We may well call Goethe the representative man of his time, because he belonged to it and not only to his nation, as was painfully felt by his German contemporaries who saw with horror how little Goethe was moved by national sympathies. Goethe manifested unconsciously in his actions that he considered himself belonging to the world as much as to his country. The quiet clearness of his mind was not disturbed

by the tidal wave of Rousseau's manifesto, nor by his intercourse with enthusiastic Basedow, whom Goethe good-humoredly describes in his autobiography. Goethe's universality of mind could not remain satisfied with the one-sided fervor of his time. In educational matters as well as in others his genius led him away from the trodden path. His views, if not of practical importance, have at least the value which genius and originality produce. His perfect individuality could not endure the fragmentary culture which naturalism tended to give. He who had tasted the full sweetness of Greek lore, into whose ears Homer and Sophocles had whispered their charms, could not be guilty of the barbarism that discarded the wisdom of the forefathers to look for stability and truth in the phantasmagoria of nature. In Goethe the highest type of antiquity the most advanced speculation of modern times seem linked together. His mind could at the same time create dramas that place themselves near the Greek masterpieces and discover the first facts of a theory which Darwin, acknowledging the merits of his poetic predecessor, presented to our days.

As Goethe's life is divided by the French Revolution into two almost equal periods, we can recognize two different periods in his educational views. At first the individual side of education appears to Goethe the most prominent. Whatever man becomes, he must develop himself into by his own power. By error and earnest endeavor he must rise to highest culture, to harmony with himself. Goethe's second period bears the powerful impress of modern views: no longer education of the individual by the individual, but education by society and in society. Society must take charge of the harmonious development of the general faculties of man, while to the individual is left the working out of his special gifts. While this external change in Goethe's views was con-

ditioned by the advancing spirit of the time, they remained unchanged in their main principle. In the life of the organic world Goethe distinguished two tendencies, one, the arbitrary drift of individual character, the other the submission to immutable law. So in man he distinguishes the fate that is born with us, in the shape of natural defects or talents and in opposition to this the vicissitudes of life that tend to encroach upon the natural character without being able to destroy it. It is always doubtful whether fate will allow man to attain the ideal which is born with him in his temperament and capabilities. Hence education must take the place of chance and fate and lead man to fulfill his destiny, which is the full development of his powers according to his innate ideal. This view pervades the whole of Goethe's educational remarks which we find distributed over many of his works, and from it numerous principles follow as natural results. Education, says Goethe, must bring out what is in the mind, and not educate things into it. All education must lead to action. An acted error is better than an idle thought, because the former leads to truth. Educate children to serve, as obedience alone makes social, religious and moral harmony possible. The negative element must be altogether discarded in education.

Goethe had a very firm conviction of the correctness of the latter principle, and believed consistently in all its consequences. Hence he was opposed in education to the classification in natural science, to the anatomical and analytic methods.

He did not fail to see that both analysis and synthesis are the necessary functions of the human mind, but synthesis, after all, he holds to be the proper method in education. In Wilhelm Meister he goes as far as to propose a discontinuance of the analytical process of dissection in medical schools.

Instead of destroying the dead bodies by analyzing them into parts, he suggests that young physicians be taught instead to imitate the parts of the body in colored wax. "You will soon find," says one of Goethe's characters, "that creating teaches more than destroying, uniting more than separating, to animate what seems without life more than to kill again what is dead."

The conversational method seemed to Goethe the true mode of instruction. In his *Elective Affinities* he makes the teacher express this opinion :

"Perhaps we ought to make a secret of the tricks of our own handicraft. Take any subject, a substance, an idea, whatever you like; keep fast hold of it; make yourself thoroughly acquainted with it in all its parts, and then it will be easy for you, in conversation, to find out, with a mass of children, how much about it has already developed itself in them; what requires to be stimulated, what to be directly communicated. The answers to your questions may be as unsatisfactory as they will, they may wander wide of the mark; if you only take care that your counter-question shall draw their thoughts and senses inwards again; if you do not allow yourself to be driven from your own position—the children will at last reflect, comprehend, learn only what the teacher desires them to learn, and the subject will be presented to them in the light in which he wishes them to see it. The greatest mistake which he can make is to allow himself to be run away with from the subject; not to know how to keep fast to the point with which he is engaged.

"The right method of teaching is the reverse, I see, of what we must do in life. In society we must keep the attention long upon nothing, and in instruction the first commandment is to permit no dissipation of it.

"Variety, without dissipation, were the best motto for both

teaching and life, if this desirable equipoise were easy to be preserved. Men should wear a uniform from their childhood upwards. They have to accustom themselves to work together; to lose themselves among their equals; to obey in masses, and to work on a large scale. Every kind of uniform, moreover, generates a military habit of thought, and a smart, straightforward carriage. All boys are born soldiers, whatever you do with them. You have only to watch them at their mock fights and games, their storming parties and scaling parties.

“Women should go about in every sort of variety of dress; each following her own style and her own likings, that each may learn to feel what sits well upon her and becomes her. And for a more weighty reason as well—because it is appointed for them to stand alone all their lives, and work alone.”

This 7th chapter, second part, of the *Elective Affinities*, contains among others the following educational suggestions :

“Fathers are usually poor educators of their sons; because there remains always some despotic element in their relation. Mothers, however, are the best educators of their daughters. Nobody can overcome the influence of first training. Examinations are to test whether ability has grown into skill.”

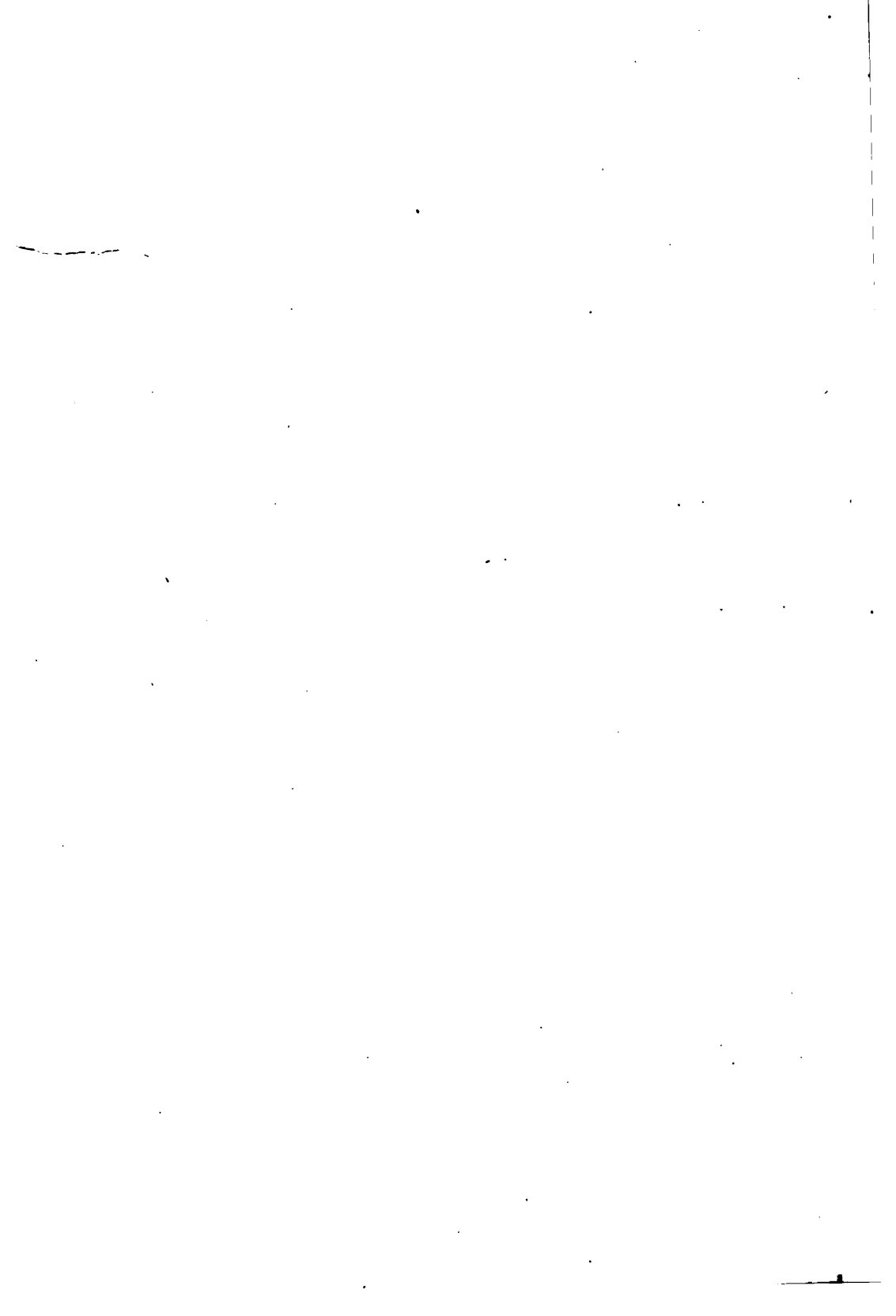
Goethe did not ignore the moral side of education, and his suggestions in this direction are full of the deepest meaning.

Let the youths grow in undisturbed freedom; do not break their self-confidence by perpetual scolding and reproof and tolerate allowable peculiarities. Give systematic exercise to the power of self-control. Do not forbid—but order; do not prevent—but encourage. Fear is the worst means of education. Do not eradicate faults by force, but substitute what is good in their place. Restless, hasteless, sociable activity is the basis of physical, intellectual and moral health. This activity must be in connection with the future calling. Beware of a talent which you cannot perfect.

Out of many I have selected a few of Goethe's sayings on the subject of education; we shall find that the pulsation of genius beats in all of them. Goethe's principle is that of our days: Educate the child into its perfect humanity, by school and life in the society of his equals. If Goethe is to be the representative of our time for generations to come, he is not an unfit expounder of the educational thoughts that move the modern world.

But the landmark which our age will leave behind, is not to be found in any great teacher, not in some writing educational demi-god like Rousseau, but is found in the structure of common schools reared by a free commonwealth that offer means of highest culture to a whole nation.

L. F. SOLDAN.





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